KENT STATE
UNIVERSITY

# 2022 GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

## Department of Biological Sciences

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

# A HANDBOOK AND GUIDE FOR GRADAUTE STUDENTS IN BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

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# Graduate School and Overview

## What is graduate school like? How does it differ from your undergraduate program?

You may have just finished your undergraduate degree or been out of school for years before starting graduate school. Regardless of which path led you here, perhaps the most important thing to know from day one is how different graduate school is from your undergraduate work. Want to know how to be successful in graduate school? Well, it really is not that complicated-you just have to decide to do it. Here are some hints:

- Treat being in graduate school like a profession--this means talking with your advisor, other students, and faculty about your research and career plans.

- Come to work every day and spend as much time as possible in the lab or field. Summer breaks are prime research time, not a time for a long vacation.

- Remember that your research is important. It is not just a requirement for your degree.

- Communicate with others on a scientific level. Learn and use the terminology in your field. Maybe not at the beginning of your graduate school career, but definitely by the end, you are expected to be articulate in your field and capable of presenting to others what you have learned and what you have discovered from your research!

- Take your responsibilities seriously but make research your top priority. Your research is the most important factor--it will determine when you finish and what happens in your career. Start on it early and focus your efforts on your research project.

Unlike an undergraduate, who takes a prescribed list of courses, you are here to become a scientist and to conduct a research project, in addition to taking classes. Seek advice from faculty (not just your advisor) and other students.

A person may first obtain a MS degree and then, if they want, go on for a PhD. It is also possible to obtain a PhD without getting an MS. The PhD is the ultimate degree in the field and requires much more time and effort than a MS. The PhD also requires a much higher level of scientific knowledge and greater expectations in research.

There are three MS and three PhD degree programs in BSCI: Integrative Physiology and Neurobiology, Cell Biology and Molecular Genetics, and Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Each of these degree programs has different course requirements. In addition, numerous faculty members in the department are also faculty of the School of Biomedical Sciences (BMS). (Please keep in mind that although some information in this manual could be useful to BMS graduate students, it is written specifically for BSCI students.) For the University's Guide to Graduate Education, please click here.

# Graduate Studies Office

The Graduate Studies Office Suite is located in 253 of Cunningham Hall, with 253B being the graduate secretary's office and 253C being the graduate coordinator's office. The graduate coordinator is the faculty member that oversees the BSCI graduate program.

The Graduate Studies Office is responsible for the departmental interactions involving graduate students. This includes examination of files for students seeking admission, departmental graduate assistantships, processing of paperwork, and communication with the College of Arts and Sciences and Graduate Studies. There are specific events in your graduate career that are monitored, documented, and forwarded to other parts of the University by the Graduate Studies Office. (You need to keep track of what needs to be done when (this handbook will help), ask questions, and consult other sources of information (like the graduate catalog)). The Graduate Studies Office is also here to help you with any issues, e.g. professional, personal, etc.., that may arise during your time as a graduate student.

## Graduate Studies Committee

The **Graduate Studies Committee** (GSC) is the primary agent through which graduate affairs are conducted within the department. It consists of four elected faculty members and a graduate student representative. Regular meetings are held to consider requests, assistantships, and other issues. A typical course of action is for the graduate coordinator to convene the GSC and set an agenda for the meeting. The GSC votes on many matters and appropriate responses are taken based upon their recommendations. For example, suppose a student wants a course substitution. The student would consult with their advisor and guidance committee. If the substitution were deemed appropriate, then the advisor and guidance committee would fill out the required form and submit it to graduate coordinator. The GSC would vote on this request after examining all necessary documents and consultation with other parties (this would be, in this particular example, the person that teaches the course at Kent for which there is a substitution request). The student's file is commonly used as a source of information and copies of grade reports, transcripts, and other documents are maintained in these folders.

You can call the Graduate Studies Office at (672-2819) or stop by as necessary.

# Biological Sciences Main Office Procedures

## Graduate Student Information

### Copying:

- It is the responsibility of the grad student to be aware of U.S. copyright laws and to abide by them.
- Handouts and exams for labs you are teaching can be printed out by you at any number of copy machines around Cunningham Hall or the Integrated Sciences Building. Whenever possible you are expected to share handouts with your students via blackboard or email. If you need to gain access to the copy room near the Biology Main Office, please speak to the front office staff.
- The department copier is not to be used for personal documents.

### Student Assignments:

- Please have students turn assignments in to you during your office hours or in class. They should not be turned in at the main office. To avoid FERPA violations students need to have their papers handed to them individually. More details on this can be found in the Teaching Assistants Handbook.

### Personal Information and Schedule:

- Should you move during your time at KSU, please inform the Graduate Studies Office of your new address and phone number.

### Seminars:

- The Departmental seminar schedule is usually sent out towards the start of each semester; it is every Friday at noon. There are, however, a variety of other seminars around campus that you may want to attend.

### Room Sign-ups:

- If you need to use meeting Rooms A-201 or Seminar room A-108, these can be signed up for online here: http://scheduling.science.kent.edu.

### Keys & Flashcard Access:

- Keys and Flashcard access are handled in the stockroom (Room 222). Electronic forms to fill out can be found in the forms library: http://www.kent.edu/biology/biology-form-library.

### Teaching Supplies:

- The supplies that the department provides are kept in the mailroom, if you need something please speak to the front office staff.

### Grad Student Mailbox Assignments:

- Mailbox assignments are handled by the Biology Graduate Studies Office, Room 253B. The mailboxes are physically located in the Biology Main Office, Room 256. Please check your mail daily as many important departmental notices are placed there.

## Offices

- All incoming MS and PhD students that are working with BSCI advisors in Cunningham Hall will be assigned desks in one of our graduate student offices; unless you have office space in the integrated sciences building. You can use this space to hold office hours, study, write, etc… It is our expectation that you will be a good citizen by being respectful of one another and keep the area neat and organized. You are welcome to eat in this space or in the Graduate Student Lounge, CHH 029. The location of the lounge will be relocated this year. We will let you know where and when once it is worked out.

## Orientation/Training

- All incoming students are required to sign up for Graduate Student Orientation: https://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/gso. In addition to this University-wide training, several "in house" training sessions will also be scheduled. Many of these sessions are for new students, but some, such as TA Safety Training, are required for all students.

# Student-Advisor Relationship

The relationship between a student and advisor is absolutely critical to the success of a student. Each student and advisor have their own style, personalities, and varying levels of experience. Ideally, this relationship is meant to last a lifetime (for example, an advisor cannot review a proposal submitted to the National Science Foundation by a former student-**ever!**). As you enter this relationship, keep this perspective. Your advisor will not only provide guidance while you are a student-they also write letters of reference and help you throughout your career. Go into the relationship knowing that this should be a permanent connection and that your advisor is one factor that greatly influences your professional development. Many people that you meet in science will ask you "Who was your advisor?". It does not matter how many years have gone by-people ask this all the time. It is really important for PhD students to understand their place in the legacy of their advisor's training. Even your academic grandparents (your advisor's advisor) will take pride in your accomplishments. So, ask your advisor about their advisor and graduate school experience.

Each advisor has their own philosophy--some meet with each student individually each week while others meet with all their students in a group. You should work within the framework and philosophy of your advisor BUT, you should understand that you are responsible for your own success. It is your program and your advisor is there to give advice! It is up to you to seek guidance when needed! Got a problem or question? Feeling frustrated? Wondering why you wanted to go to graduate school? Thinking of quitting? Well, your first stop should be your advisor's office…tell them what is going on. Advisors are often very busy so they might not detect your needs unless you tell them.

Sometimes the research interests and personality of the student and advisor do not mesh. It is not uncommon for a student to switch advisors, but this should only be done after detailed meetings with the original advisor and the person that would serve as the new advisor. Each student must always have an advisor. Should a switch be necessary, please consult the Graduate Studies Office. Other times a student might want two advisors. Perhaps a student came in with one advisor and then met another faculty member whose research area would be of value. In this case, a student can have two co-advisors. To change advisor or to add an advisor, complete the Change of Advisor Form. The Graduate Studies Office is also here to offer support if there are issues a student does not feel comfortable discussing with their advisor.

## Expectations for Advisees:

1. Have an agenda and use a calendar to organize and track your time and effort
2. Initiate regular meetings with advisor and at least annual meetings with committee
3. Make a work plan and define goals with their assistance
4. Consult with advisor before sharing lab materials and/or data with others
5. Gain training before using equipment and ask for permission (from owner) prior to using another investigators' equipment
6. Submit the best, most finished version of chapters or manuscripts possible

7. Give advisor ample time to read and comment on a chapter or manuscript
8. Respond fully to advisor's comments and critiques, including incorporating agreed-upon changes and revisions into work
9. Plan for grant writing or job applications by identifying possibilities well in advance of deadlines.
10. When requesting a letter of recommendation, provide advisor and other faculty with an updated c.v., a copy of the proposal or cover letter, and a memo or outline on state of work in progress; if applicable, also a list of courses taken with the faculty member as well as titles of papers and topics of presentations made in class
11. Consult advisor on significant professional decisions
12. Keep advisor informed of professional development after graduation

## Expectations for Advisors:

1. Introduce their advisees into the professional practices of the discipline (i.e., publishing, conference presentations, etc.)
2. Provide advice and support to students as they begin teaching
3. Direct students to appropriate research policies and training related to their research (e.g., IRB, responsible conduct of research, human-subject protection, animal care, hazardous materials, etc.)
4. Provide a safe and secure environment for conducting research
5. Suggest pertinent bibliographical sources and approaches
6. Read and return work to advisee promptly (*ideally within one month*) and with useful comments
7. Maintain active supervision of student work during leaves or extended absences from campus
8. Are editors of small (grammar, style) and large (structure and success of argument) components of student work
9. Help students to prepare abstracts or papers for conferences and manuscripts for publication and dissertation/thesis documents
10. Encourage students to participate in professional conferences
11. Advise students on applying for grants to support their research and writing and read drafts of grant proposals
12. Provide timely and thoughtful letters of recommendation for students
13. In consultation with the student and the chair, form the faculty committee for the prospectus and dissertation defenses
14. Meet with advisee to discuss preparing for the academic job market and alternative avenues for PhDs
15. Provide support to advisees beyond graduation
16. Provide honest and direct feedback of a student's progress at regular intervals including during the annual evaluation & progress report

# Thesis and Dissertation Committees

There are important differences in requirements for a MS degree and a PhD degree. One manifestation of these differences is in the way the guidance committee is constructed and used. However, they start in the same manner. During your first semester, you and your advisor should select two other faculty members to be on your committee. To make your choice, talk with your advisor, talk with other students, think about your project, and consider the expertise of the various faculty members. *The majority of guidance committee must be eligible graduate faculty members with primary appointments in the Biological Sciences Department.* You should then ask the faculty members you've selected whether or not they are willing to serve on your committee.

Do not view this committee as the group standing between you and graduation. Instead, use your committee as a resource, there to offer help. There are a minimum number of times your committee needs to meet for specific events (see next chapter). However, more meetings can be a good idea to keep your progress on track and one meeting per year is the minimum.

**Once a doctoral student has completed their candidacy exams, the committee is expanded to four members and is now referred to as the "dissertation committee".** The dissertation committee must include at least THREE eligible graduate faculty members within the Biological Sciences Department AND at least ONE additional member whose primary appointment is outside the program. Other members may also be added to the committee at this time if it is deemed useful in the guidance and direction of the student's dissertation research project; however, a majority of members on the dissertation committee must have faculty appointments in the Biological Sciences Department. All members of the dissertation committee participate in the prospectus approval and final defense.

For the final oral defense, an "examining committee" is formed. When the advisor believes the candidate's dissertation is ready for defense, the advisor needs to submit a request to the College Dean for appointment of a graduate faculty representative. The examining committee consists of the dissertation committee and an appointed graduate faculty representative. The request should be submitted as early as is feasible in the semester you plan to graduate (or maybe the semester before) http://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-faculty-representative). The graduate faculty representative may serve as the moderator of the final oral defense. If a separate moderator is desired, the individual will be selected by the dissertation committee from members of the graduate faculty on the D-list who is not a faculty member in the candidate's program (in this case, the moderator is not a member of the examining committee and do not vote). Rules for the defense can be found under the section *Dissertation Final Examination Rules*.

Sometimes, faculty at KSU cannot meet all of the guidance needs of a student. As appropriate, additional committee members may be drawn from other schools (such as The University of Akron) or from other institutions or agencies. Committee members that do not have graduate faculty status at KSU must apply for temporary graduate faculty status before they can serve on a committee. This involves the advisor providing a request and rationale for the appointment and a copy of the outside

members' Curriculum Vitae (CV) to the Graduate Studies Office. The Graduate Studies Committee then evaluates the request. If they approve it, the Graduate Studies Office then submits the necessary paperwork. It is important that temporary appointments be done early on in a student's program, if at all possible, to avoid delays and/or problems related to forms committee members must sign.

Please review the attached document "Guidelines Dissertation Final Examination" under Forms.

# Procedures and Timeline

## Master's Degree

Copies of the checklist that provide the series of events in the timeline can be found online. Ideally, a MS degree can be completed in 2 years, but that requires that the timeline be followed carefully. Some students will take 2.5 to 3 years, especially if they do not follow the timeline or if there are problems with their research project. Support beyond 2 years will require a description of the work that remains to be done (e.g. experiments, data analyses, chapters to write), a timeline for finishing, and a letter of support from their advisor. Any extension of funding request beyond 3 years requires an explanation for why the previous timeline was not successfully followed, an updated description and plan, and a letter of support from the thesis committee. However, the department will not support students on an assistantship indefinitely (i.e. beyond 3 years). Students have 7 years from the time they start the program to successfully defend their thesis. There are some differences among departments in certain steps in the MS program and the description below follows the BSCI standards.

During the **first semester**, the student should get oriented to the program, read up on their field of research, and begin working with their advisor to come up with a research topic. By the end of the **first semester**, the student should have developed a guidance committee, which is the student's Thesis Committee. The committee should have a meeting to discuss the courses that the student will take. Members of your committee are required to be Graduate Faculty in the department; please check with your advisor about the specific requirements. The committee members should sign the program of study form indicating their consent to the course plan for the student. This form and all others should be turned in to the Graduate Studies Office (253B CHH) or put in the Graduate Studies mailbox- https://www.kent.edu/biology/graduate-forms. This should be done before classes begin in the second semester to make sure the student takes the necessary courses.

**Each fall and spring semester** MS students are required to enroll in **seminar**. The first semester teaching assistants must sign up for the course on Responsible and Effective Conduct. Typically, a student will take formal graded courses for their first three or four semesters. **Each program has specific course requirements; so, check the program description.** Students **should not** sign up for additional courses beyond those required and recommended by the committee. Students also sign up for Research Hours (typically each term, including summer) and a total of 6 hours of Thesis I. After completion of Thesis I, a student must sign up for Thesis II (2 credits) each semester until they graduate. Students who are teaching or research assistants must register each term with a full-time load (minimum 8 credit hours). If you are no longer on an assistantship (for example, you complete your courses and research but take a full-time job or move before you finish writing your thesis), you still have to register for Thesis II **each semester until you are done-** continuous enrollment is a requirement of the degree. Also, if you are working in a lab doing research but are not on an assistantship, you need to be a registered student.

By the **end of the second semester**, the student (with guidance from the advisor) should write a brief proposal describing the plan for their research project. This proposal should be given to the guidance

committee whom will meet to discuss it. The proposal format is described in the appendix. Upon completion of this meeting, the *Thesis Topic Approval form* should be completed.

During the **summer**, the student typically should focus on their research project. A summer squandered will delay your graduation. Typically, first year students will register for Thesis I (and, as needed, Research hours) during Summer. Students who are teaching or research assistants must register with a full-time load (minimum 6 credit hours for Summer only).

By the end of the **second year**, ideally, a student will have written their thesis (again, with guidance from their advisor). Students **must** also present a **Departmental** seminar about their research (30 minutes in length; 20-25 minutes of content with 5-10 minutes of questions). This can either be presented during the departmental seminar or as a part of your thesis defense. If you are going to present in the departmental seminar, please contact the seminar coordinator a semester before you plan to present to check availability of dates. Don't forget to file for graduation by the date prescribed for graduation in a given semester, which is typically within the first week of the semester that you want to graduate. The student and advisor should consult with the guidance committee to set a date and time for the thesis defense. The thesis should be given to the guidance committee a minimum of 2 weeks before the defense and must be properly formatted. A thesis defense that does not include a seminar typically includes a 15-20 minute presentation by the student followed by questions from the committee. The defense is open to the public, thus is it important that you book a room large enough to accommodate a crowd. Upon completion of the defense, the *Report on Thesis Final Examination* form should be completed electronically and signed by the committee. Revisions should be made to the thesis and the advisor should examine it. The *Thesis Preparation Approval Form* should be completed and signature pages (in **BLACK** ink on rag bond paper, two copies) should be turned into the Graduate Studies Office. The final version of the thesis is then emailed to the graduate secretary where it will be checked by the Graduate Coordinator for compliance with the required guidelines. Once it meets approval, it will be emailed to the Chair for their approval. Once the forms are submitted to the College of A&S a student can upload their thesis into OhioLink.

* When writing a thesis the instructions laid out in the style guide must be followed: https://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-forms. Failure to do so may result in your thesis not being submitted to the College on time.

As you plan for your graduation, please check the university deadlines. There are specific dates for completion of the thesis and filing of your graduation application.

Copies of the *checklist* that provide the series of events in the timeline can be downloaded from the departmental web site- https://www.kent.edu/biology/graduate-forms.

The Graduation-Exit Checklist can be downloaded from the departmental web site- https://www.kent.edu/biology/graduate-forms. This form should be completed and submitted the Biological Sciences Graduate Studies Office before graduation.

## Ph.D. Degree

Getting a PhD is a more complex and much longer process than getting a MS degree. PhD students are working toward the highest degree offered in our College. Many PhD students enter our program after completing their bachelor's or master's degrees at another university. However, **Masters' students at KSU can also matriculate into the PhD program with the approval of their advisor, guidance committee, the department, and the College of Arts & Sciences**. Matriculation can occur after successful completion of at least 9 hours of coursework and if the student meets the PhD entrance requirements, is in good academic standing, and has the enthusiastic support for their advisor and guidance committee. Ideally, a PhD degree can be completed in 5 years, although it is common for students to take an extra semester or two to complete their dissertation if the timeline provided below is not followed or their research project does not progress smoothly. Support beyond 5 years requires the submission of a funding extension request that includes: a description of the work that remains to be done (e.g. experiments, data analyses, chapters to write), a timeline for finishing, and a letter of support from their advisor. Any extension of funding request beyond 6 years requires an explanation for why the previous timeline was not successfully followed, an updated description and plan, and a letter of support from the dissertation committee. While students have 10 years from the time they start the program to successfully defend their dissertation, the department typically does not support students on an assistantship beyond 6-7 years.

As soon as possible upon entry into graduate school, a doctoral student should **form a guidance committee**. Members of your committee are required to be Graduate Faculty in the department; please check with your advisor about the specific requirements. Prior to the **second semester**, the committee should meet to discuss the courses the student should take. Students in the PhD program should complete the *Program of Study Form* and have it signed by their committee- https://www.kent.edu/biology/graduate-forms.

Ideally, coursework is completed after four semesters. During each of these semesters, the student should enroll in a seminar. It is important that the courses taken match what is listed on the Program of Study Form. Any changes require completion of a new program of study form. Students should not sign up for any additional courses beyond those required and recommended by the committee, without consulting their advisor.

Students take their candidacy exam during the last semester of coursework, which is typically during the Spring semester of their second year. The department currently allows for two different types of candidacy exams. The first is the traditional written exam, which consists of questions submitted by the committee in three different topic areas; different committee members should be assigned to each of these three areas. The second is a grant format in which the written portion is put together as a research grant on a topic that is different than your dissertation topic. In this case, the topic must be approved by your committee and then you will be given several weeks to write the grant; guidelines for

this format can be found in the forms library. *It is the committee, not the student, that decides on the format.*

For both exams, after the written/grant portion is successfully completed, the oral candidacy exams should be scheduled. The committee meets and questions the students about topics they deem relevant. Upon completion, the Report of Candidacy Exam form should be filled out. The possible outcomes for the candidacy exam are: Pass, Fail, or Suspend (this is only temporary and must be resolved before moving forward in the program). If you receive a decision of Suspend you will be provided with feedback on how any issues will be resolved as well as a timeline. Please keep in mind that candidacy exams are used to test your critical thinking skills and help your committee determine your readiness for entrance into candidacy. Since these exams are highly individualized comparisons with your peers may not be particularly helpful.

After the candidacy exam is passed, no more formal coursework can be taken for credit. **From this point forward, the student should provide their dissertation committee with annual updates and inform them of any significant changes in their project, as described in the Prospectus.** The student should sign up for 30 hours of Dissertation I (15 hours each for 2 semesters). Following completion of Dissertation I, the student should enroll in Dissertation II until the degree is completed. **Note that students who are on graduate assistantships are required to sign up for 15 hours of Dissertation II per semester**.

By the end of the semester following the semester in which candidacy exams were taken, the doctoral prospectus must be written and defended. **The guidance committee is expanded to form the dissertation committee prior to the prospectus defense.** Upon completion of the prospectus defense the *Notification of Approved Dissertation Topic and Prospectus* form is completed and signed by the committee.

Students **must** also present a **Departmental** seminar about their research (60 minutes in length; 45-50 minutes of content with 10-15 minutes of questions). This can either be presented during the departmental seminar or as a part of your dissertation defense. If you are going to present in the departmental seminar, please contact the seminar coordinator a semester before you plan to present to check availability of dates.

The final defense of the dissertation is a formal event that is open to the public. Considerable time and planning are necessary, so the student and advisor must work closely. **First**, the advisor requests that the Dean of the College assign a Graduate Faculty Representative (this should be done at the start of the semester you plan to graduate, at the latest- http://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-faculty-representative). **Second**, the dissertation committee asks a faculty member to serve as a moderator. **Third**, the dissertation document is circulated to the committee **a minimum of 30 days prior** to the defense. At this time the dissertation MUST be formatted correctly (please be sure to strictly adhere to the style guide: https://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-forms) and should generally only require minor changes. **Fourth**, after the initial 10-day reading period the advisor polls the committee about the

suitability of the dissertation for defense- *the result of this meeting must be relayed to the Graduate Studies Office so that the College can be notified*. The advisor should download the Pre-Defense Meeting form from the departmental web site- https://www.kent.edu/biology/graduate-forms. This form should be completed and submitted the Biological Sciences Graduate Studies Office at least 2 weeks before the defense is to be held.

If the committee approves the document for defense the student and/or advisor MUST notify the BSCI Graduate Office so that notification of the defense can be circulated. The student then has 10 days to make changes, resubmit to the committee and they have another 10-day reading period (20 days total) before the final defense. After the final defense, a *Report of Dissertation Final Examination* form should be completed electronically and signed by the committee. The committee shall also sign the dissertation signature page (in **BLACK** ink on rag bond paper, two copies). The dissertation is then checked by the Graduate Coordinator and given department approval via completion of the Dissertation Preparation approval form and signing of the approval page by the department Chair- Failure to follow the guidelines laid out in the Style Guide may result in your dissertation not being submitted to the College on time. When the dissertation has been approved the student is responsible for getting the document uploaded into OhioLink.

As you plan for your graduation, please check the university deadlines. There are specific dates for completion of the dissertation and filing of your graduation application.

Copies of the *checklist* that provide the series of events in the timeline can be downloaded from the departmental web site- https://www.kent.edu/biology/graduate-forms.

The Graduation-Exit Checklist can be downloaded from the departmental web site- https://www.kent.edu/biology/graduate-forms. This form should be completed and submitted the Biological Sciences Graduate Studies Office before graduation.

# Guidelines for BSCI Graduate Student Coursework

## Program of Study Form

MS and PhD students should complete the *program of study form* and have it approved by their committee before the start of their second semester of study. This is necessary to develop an effective plan for completing required courses and any electives needed by a particular student.

Copies of the form can be downloaded from the department website. The student should only take those courses specified on the program of study form. If the program of study form needs to be changed due to a change in plans (i.e., taking a different course), a new program of study form should be prepared and signed by your committee. It is the responsibility of the student to pay for courses taken that are not part of the program of study.

## Consultation Between the Student and Advisor

Students should consult with their advisor about what courses they should take each term.

Undergraduate courses should not be taken, unless the advisor, guidance committee and Graduate Studies Committee deem this is necessary to make up deficiencies. Requests should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Committee in writing by the advisor with a clear justification for the recommendation that the student be allowed to take an undergraduate course.

Any courses a student needs to take from outside the department should be listed on the program of study along with courses taken in the department. Students should not take any extra courses without the approval of their advisor and committee and all courses should be listed on the program of study form. Students who have not yet completed a program of study form must consult with their advisor before signing up for courses outside the department. The advisor may be asked by the Graduate Studies Committee to provide the rationale for allowing such a request.

## Course Substitutions and Waivers

If a student is to be exempt from a required course for their program, the following steps must be followed.

1. The student and advisor must consult with the student's guidance committee to make sure the deviation sought is appropriate in the view of the guidance committee. The student should bring a "course substitution/waiver" form to the meeting for the committee to sign indicating their approval.

2. The student's advisor must submit a written request, along with the required form, to the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) requesting that a specific deviation be authorized.

3. The rationale must be clearly stated. This rationale is what will be used by the GSC in making a recommendation so it must be clear and complete.

4. In the case of arguments for deviations based on prior coursework (i.e., course substitutions), the student must supply to the Graduate Coordinator a syllabus, class notes, and any other information available about the prior course. The Graduate Coordinator will then solicit a written statement from the instructor of the Kent course, for which the substitution is requested.

5. The Graduate Studies Committee will evaluate the original request and any support documentation and make a determination. This determination will be forwarded to the advisor and student.

Any requests for substitutions must be made prior to enrolling in the course that the student is attempting to use as a substitute. Thus, if a student wants to substitute course B for course A, they should not sign up for course B until their request has been approved.

## Transfer Credit

A maximum of 12 semester hours of graduate credit may be accepted by transfer from accredited institutions provided (1) the work was of "A" or "B" quality; (2) the work fits into the student's program at Kent State; (3) credit is less than six (nine) years old at the time of the master's (doctoral) degree is conferred at Kent State; (4) an official transcript *with an accompanying explanatory letter* is filed in the department; and (5) the student's advisor, department graduate committee and the graduate dean approve.

An "accredited" institution is one that is approved or accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting agency (e.g., North Central Association of Colleges and Schools) for graduate-level work.

# BSCI MS and PhD Degree Requirements

All Master's and Doctoral students are required to consult with their advisor prior to registering for classes during their first semester. All students must form a guidance committee prior to the end of their first semester consisting of their advisor and two other members of the graduate faculty. The committee in collaboration with the faculty advisor and the student devises a curriculum of coursework following the guidelines below. This *program of study* is subject to the approval of the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Studies Committee. The program of study must be submitted prior to the end of the first semester in which a student is enrolled. Students who change their guidance committee after completing the program of study should inform the Graduate Coordinator, and this should only be done under extenuating circumstances. Should it become necessary to revise the Program of Study, a new form must be completed.

## Master of Science Degree Requirements

Students must complete a minimum of 32 hours of graduate course work; including a minimum of 14 hours of formal graduate course work and 6 credits of Thesis I. After completing 6 hours of Thesis I, continual registration for Thesis II is required. Students are required to present at least one departmental seminar about their research (30 minutes in length; 15-20 minutes of content with 5-10 minutes of questions). Students must also submit a *Notification of Approved Thesis Topic form* to the Graduate Studies Office after putting together their Research Proposal (see below).

**Thesis and Final Defense**: The student must complete a master's thesis. It is expected that the student will present the results of their study in a defense open to students and faculty. The thesis must be presented and defended before the Thesis Committee with not more than one negative vote in order to be recommended to the Department and the College of Arts and Sciences for degree conferral.

## Doctoral Degree Requirements

Required coursework for the doctoral program includes research hours for a total of 60 credit hours beyond the master's degree or 90 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree, of which 20 credits must be formal courses. Students are required to present a departmental seminar about their research (60 minutes in length; 45-50 minutes of content with 10-15 minutes of questions).

After completing their coursework, a student completes the doctoral program by being admitted to candidacy, by proposing a research project to the faculty, and by completing and defending that research with a written dissertation before a faculty committee.

**Candidacy Exams:** The student is admitted to doctoral candidacy following successful completion of both written/grant and oral candidacy examinations. The written exam is based on prior coursework and coursework taken in this graduate program as determined by the student's academic Guidance Committee, which must consist of at least three eligible faculty members. The advisor(s), and a majority of members of the Guidance Committee must be members of the graduate program. This committee is responsible for determining the student's academic curriculum and for administering the candidacy

exams. Following successful completion of candidacy exams, students register for Dissertation I for two semesters and thereafter for Dissertation II continually.

**Prospectus:** Following admission to candidacy, the Guidance Committee is expanded to at least four eligible members and is now called the "Dissertation Committee". The dissertation committee must include at least THREE eligible graduate faculty members from the candidate's degree program and at least ONE additional member whose primary appointment is not in the Department of Biological Sciences; this person is designated the "outside member". Other members may also be added to the committee at this time if it is deemed useful in the guidance and direction of the student's dissertation research project; however, a majority of the dissertation committee must have faculty appointments in BSCI. It is expected that a student begins their doctoral research by successfully writing and presenting a formal prospectus for their research project to the Dissertation Committee. The presentation of the dissertation prospectus should be presented to the Dissertation Committee for approval as soon as possible and preferably no later than the semester following completion of the candidacy exam.

The Prospectus should be a research narrative that is prepared in consultation with their dissertation advisor. The format is similar to a grant proposal and includes background/significance, hypotheses/objectives to be tested, research strategy and any preliminary data (although data are not required). Often this is organized by proposed chapters with a timeline for each major experiment. A typical prospectus is 10-20 pages in length and provides sufficient information so the committee understands what questions are being addressed and why, and what the approach will be to test the hypothesis. Following completion of the written document, the prospectus is distributed to the committee two weeks before an oral presentation is scheduled (30 minute presentation followed by 60 minute discussion is typical).

The prospectus permits the committee to evaluate a student's knowledge of his/her research project, provide feedback on the approach, and determine if the proposed work is both sufficient for a dissertation and reasonable to complete within a five year timeframe from when the student started the program. Upon satisfactorily completing the prospectus, the *Notification of Approved Dissertation Topic and Prospectus* form is completed and signed by the committee. The approved Prospectus acts as a contract that describes the research to be completed by the student and is modifiable in consultation with their committee. It is expected that students communicate with their committees annually regarding progress.

**Examining Committee and Final Defense:** When the advisor believes the candidate's dissertation is ready for defense, the advisor will submit a request to the College for appointment of a graduate faculty representative and convene an examining committee. The examining committee consists of the dissertation committee and an appointed graduate faculty representative. The student must present the results of their research project to the Examining Committee in the format of a completed dissertation. When the committee agrees that the project is complete and the dissertation sufficiently well written, the student must defend the significance and results of the project in a public dissertation defense. **Doctoral students are required to submit at least one manuscript based on their doctoral research at**

**Kent State University to a refereed scientific journal prior to graduation. Dissertation committees are to assure that this requirement is met.**

## Curricular Guidelines for MS and PhD students

Students must enroll in appropriate coursework for their focus area, including courses in their major area. In addition, doctoral students are expected to include coursework in other appropriate areas to insure a breadth of training.

PhD students in the *Ecology and Evolutionary Biology* program are required to take the following four (4) core courses: Ecological and Evolutionary Genetics, Evolutionary Biology, Populations and Communities, Communities and Ecosystems. Masters students in the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology program must take three (3) of these core courses. https://www.kent.edu/biology/ecology-and-evolutionary-biology-eeb.

Students in the *Integrative Physiology and Neurobiology* program are required to take discipline-appropriate courses such as: Eukaryotic Cell Biology, Cellular and Molecular Neuroscience, Neurobiology: Systems and Behavior. Tracks within this program, with the recommended coursework listed, can be found here: https://www.kent.edu/biology/integrative-physiology-and-neurobiology-ipn.

Students in the *Cell Biology and Molecular Genetics* program must take at least one course in each of the following areas: cell biology (such as Eukaryotic Cell Biology) and biochemistry (such as Bioenergetics). Tracks within this program, with the recommended coursework listed, can be found here: https://www.kent.edu/biology/cell-biology-and-molecular-genetics-cbmg.

In addition, the following courses are required for all MS and PhD students:

1. Students are required to enroll in at least one graduate level course in statistics. This should be BSCI 5/70142 unless the guidance committee decides that a different course in statistics is warranted.

2. All students are required to attend seminar; pre-candidacy doctoral and MS students must enroll in seminar each semester in Physiology or Ecology (as is appropriate).

3. Students should enroll in additional courses that provide necessary skills for completion of research projects and that will be beneficial for their professional development.

4. All students are required to take Responsible and Effective Conduct of Research and Teaching (BSCI 6/70184) during their first semester (or for those starting in Spring, the following Fall).

5. All student working or teaching in labs must complete the University required Lab Safety training. In addition, students must complete any other training that is appropriate to their work, i.e. radiation, animal, etc..

6. Students with coursework deficits in curricula of prior degrees, should enroll in appropriate graduate-level courses (permission must be obtained from the department to enroll in undergraduate-level courses).

Students in all graduate programs are subject to the academic rules and regulations described in the graduate catalog and are responsible for being familiar with them. Students should be aware of and adhere to the appropriate checklist for their degree program.

## Annual Performance Evaluations for Graduate Students

Students must continue to make progress in the program as well as get feedback about their progress. Thus, to help facilitate communication between graduate students and advisors, provide feedback to students, and provide an update to the department about student progress, graduate students must undergo an annual evaluation. These evaluations are to be completed by the advisor and student prior to the submission of reappointment requests; which are made towards the end of fall semester.

This form can be found in the department's form library online. It will also be emailed out each year, typically towards the end of the fall semester.

Please keep in mind that graduate students within the Department must remain in good academic standing. This means a minimum GPA of a 3.0 and progress towards degree completion (the annual evaluation is one way for us to evaluate the latter component).

## Student Conduct

All students must adhere to the KSU Code of Student Conduct. In addition, it is important to remember that you are working members of our department and as such, it is expected that you will conduct yourself in a professional manner both on and off campus, including the classroom and research laboratory.

Honesty is one of the most cherished values in academia and research. It is essential to creating and maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in research, teaching, and all educational and scholarly activities. Students are expected to complete all academic and research assignments in an honest way. Biological Sciences follows the University's policy on cheating and plagiarism, which can be found at: https://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-regarding-student-cheating-and-plagiarism.

Accusations of academic dishonesty are taken very seriously. ALL incidents of academic dishonesty, regardless of severity, should be reported to the student's faculty advisor and the Graduate Office. The Biological Sciences department recommends the guidelines listed below; but ultimately, the instructor or faculty member reporting the violation reserves the right to recommend sanctions that he/she deems appropriate including: refusing to accept the work for credit, giving an F or zero to the student for an assignment, failing a student for the entire course, reporting student to the Office of Student Conduct, or recommending a more severe disciplinary penalty.

> 1st Offense: The instructor or faculty member reporting the incident, the student, and the faculty advisor will meet to discuss the incident and create a plan of action. In most cases, sanctions are likely to include, but are not limited to, a combination of the following actions: rewriting an assignment, attending plagiarism school, writing a paper on plagiarism, and/or working on comprehension and writing skills. In cases of a more severe offense, sanctions may include:

recommending appearance before an Academic Hearing Panel, rejection of candidacy exam or thesis/dissertation, recommendation for revocation of a degree, and/or dismissal from the program.

Subsequent Offenses: The student's advisor, the student, and the Graduate Coordinator will meet to discuss the severity of the problem. Sanctions may include those listed above, particularly if the violation is considered minor and independent of the first event. However, repeated occurrence of a similar offense or in cases of a more severe offense, the GSC will be consulted to determine appropriate sanctions.

## Research Proposals for Graduate Students

The College of Arts & Sciences requires that all doctoral students prepare, present and defend a formal prospectus or proposal of their dissertation research. In addition, MS students in BSCI are required to write a brief proposal describing their research plans. The proposal submitted by an MS student generally is shorter and narrower in focus. Successful defense of a MS prospectus is documented via submission of the *Notification of Approved Thesis Topic form*.

The purpose of the prospectus is to inform the Guidance Committee of the research topic to be addressed and its significance to the field of study. It should also describe the general approach to be taken in the study, as well as describing the methods to be used.

The prospectus/proposal should be concise, yet completely inform the reader of the intent of the research. The format and style of the prospectus should follow that of a National Institutes of Health or National Science Foundation proposal. Students are expected to discuss the format of their prospectus with their advisor prior to writing it. In general, a prospectus should include-

- Introduction to the topic based on a comprehensive examination of the relevant literature.
- A description of the objectives of the study and the rationale behind the study. This may include statements of testable hypotheses.
- Approaches to be used in the study. Enough specifics about study design and methodology should be included so the committee can effectively evaluate the planned work.
- Significance of the work and broader impacts.
- References cited

For doctoral students, it is expected that the student will present this document to their Dissertation Committee for approval as soon as possible and no later than the semester following completion of the candidacy exam and at least ten days before oral presentation of the proposed work. **Note that the outside discipline member of the dissertation committee must be chosen by this time, and they will**

**participate in the prospectus defense.** In all cases, at the oral presentation of the proposed work, the student will be expected to account for the concept of the work and the techniques to be used. Approval of the Prospectus by the committee will be reported to the Graduate Coordinator and to the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences on the *Notification of Approved Dissertation* or *Thesis Topic form*.

# Teaching Assistantships

Most graduate students in our department serve as teaching assistants and this is a valuable chance to hone your communication abilities and to prepare for future employment. Each year a form is given to teaching assistants for them to request summer support and funding for the following year. The Graduate Studies Committee evaluates these requests and reappointment is dependent upon your degree progress. You should take care to follow the timeline for your degree program and to document your progress. Make sure that when you turn in your request for reappointment that your documentation of progress is up to date.

The TA coordinator, Shelley Jurkiewicz, does the teaching assignments for all BSCI courses. Before the start of each semester, you will get a note asking you to indicate any teaching preferences. Courses are assigned based on your background and interests. You should also talk with faculty whom are teaching courses with which you would like to be involved.

Teaching assistantships involve more than teaching labs. Students may also be assigned to serve as lecture aides on occasion, to assist in lab preparation, and to help with training. Some are called on to serve as Lab Coordinators for the larger classes.

The most important thing to remember is to take your responsibilities seriously but do not let them overwhelm you. You should do your job well, but it should not take precedence over successful research progress.

Large classes with multiple lab sections typically require weekly TA meetings. The graduate student who is the Lab Coordinator or the faculty instructor may organize these. You should attend each meeting and participate fully. The key is communication. If everyone does their job, things go smoothly. If you have any problems, speak to the faculty member in charge.

New teaching assistants are required to take a TA training course, scheduled for the beginning of the fall semester. Other students and faculty can also provide guidance when you have questions.

You must set aside time each week for office hours. You need an hour for each lab section. Once you have determined the days/times, email them to the graduate office. You also need to inform the students in **writing** of your office hours, office location, and how they may contact you (email, lab phone, or whatever suits you). Also, make sure and tell them what to do with papers that they might have to turn in outside of class time. Papers should not be turned into the main office.

*Please remember that serving as Teaching Assistant is a job. As such, it is expected that you will make every effort to be here so that you are able to meet your responsibilities. If, however, you have a professional meeting to attend, or another valid excuse for an absence, please notify the Graduate Coordinator and or TA Coordinator as soon as you are able so that arrangements can be made. All TAs must sign the TA Performance Policy annually, as this describes this disciplinary actions that will be taken if you are not meeting your contractual obligations.*

**For more information about Teaching Assistantships please refer to the BSCI Teaching Assistant Handbook.**

# Departmental Support and Outside Funding

## Departmental Travel Support

Students can apply for Graduate Student Senate (GSS) funding to attend in-person or a virtual scientific conference (domestic or international) where they present their scientific work.

Graduate Student Senate forms and deadlines can be found here: https://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/gss-awards-.

## Departmental Research Support

From time to time, the Department will send out solicitations for nominations for internal awards to support research or stipend. You will be notified of these via email.

## Outside funding

The websites listed below can link you to potential scholarship or research funding:

- FastWeb: Free Scholarship and College Searches Plus Financial Aid Tools and More! http://www.fastweb.com/
- College Scholarships, Colleges, and Online Degrees
- http://www.college-scholarships.com/free_scholarship_searches.htm
- Major Federal Agencies:
    - www.nsf.gov
    - www.nih.gov

## Work Study Funds

**All domestic students should complete a FAFSA form regardless if you want to take a federal loan or not.** Work Study Funds are awarded to the department based on information provided in the FAFSA form. This money goes to support our graduate program. Go to https://fafsa.ed.gov/ and apply.

# Writing Your Thesis or Dissertation

The ultimate achievement in your graduate career is writing and defending your thesis/dissertation. The first step in the process is getting the most recent version of the Style Guide from the forms library on the departmental website. A list of Common Issues with Theses and Dissertations along with templates for Thesis and Dissertation pages have been added to the departmental web page: http://www.kent.edu/biology/graduate-forms.

For doctoral students, the formal rules for the defense are described in the **Guidelines Dissertation Final Examination** attached under Forms.

When writing, it is imperative that you work closely with your advisor. You must also plan your timing carefully to make sure your committee has enough time to read your work. After you pass your defense and make any revisions required by committee members, you will email a copy of your thesis/dissertation (pdf file) with the abstract to the Graduate Studies Office (253B CHH). The graduate coordinator checks the documents before forwarding them to the department chair for their signature. **Make sure that there is sufficient time before the due date to make changes in format (if necessary).** Your signed forms and thesis/dissertation can then be picked up from the Graduate Studies Office. After this is done you are able to upload your thesis or dissertation into OhioLink.

## Keys to a Successful Graduate Program

- Take responsibility for your own success (you are the one getting the degree, not your advisor)
- Be dependable (nothing annoys an advisor more when someone, like the graduate coordinator, comes and asks THEM why YOU did not turn in a particular form)
- CHECK YOUR MAILBOX at a minimum of once a week!
- USE your official Kent EMAIL to communicate with the students in your TA lab section, faculty, etc. Check your email each day and **respond** as needed.
- COMMUNICATE with your advisor (your advisor is not psychic; they don't track you down just to make sure things are going well)
- Participate in the scientific community (go to journal clubs, go to scientific meetings, get to know faculty and students from other schools)
- Read scientific literature (you have to do it on your own, go to the library, surf OhioLink, etc.)
- Talk to other graduate students and learn from the example of the senior students
- Get involved during seminar
- Express your opinion
- Ask questions

# Your Wellness

Graduate School while it can be exciting and fulfilling can also be stressful and frustrating. Know that your physical and mental wellness are important to us. In order to better support you we have initiated trainings in the department to better equip faculty to assist students that are in crisis. We are hoping that over the next several years this training will be also be extended to staff and students in the department. Also, know that if you have been here for one semester and are in good academic standing that you have the option of taking a leave of absence, if needed, for up to one year and then re-enter your program.

If you are struggling, please, if you are able, communicate with your advisor, the graduate coordinator, or someone you trust about what is going on. We as a Department are committed to supporting you and will do what we can to assist. With respect to mental health concerns, some resources on campus can be accessed through the Step Up Speak Out website. Please remember that any discussions with the Graduate Coordinator or Chair are confidential*, unless you agree that information can be shared.

*this excludes Title IX concerns as faculty are mandatory reporters.

# Your Future Employment

What you do while in graduate school becomes a permanent part of your credentials. Publications from your work will be part of your Curriculum Vitae throughout your career.

Here are some suggestions for seeking employment:

- Attend meetings with placement services (e.g. Endocrine Society, Society for the Study of Reproduction or ASM General Meeting).
- Write unsolicited letters to faculty with whom you might like to post doc at least a year in advance, so that you can work together to obtain funding (e.g. put on a new R01 or write an NRSA).
- Network at meetings
- Use contacts such as faculty and former graduates to let you know about position openings
- Offer to give an invited lecture at other universities (or even Kent State University) to enhance your Curriculum Vitae
- The following websites may provide information helpful in securing employment.
    - http://jobs.newscientist.com/
    - www.environmentalcareer.com
    - https://www.higheredjobs.com/search/
    - https://www.sciencemag.org/careers
- Postdoctorate Grant Sources:
    - http://www.grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm

# International Student Guide

International graduate students attend a graduate student orientation program before they start during the fall semester. The following web address will provide some information regarding the Graduate Student Orientation (GSO): https://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/gso.

You may find the following websites very useful:
International Student & Scholar Services: https://www.kent.edu/isss.
Office of Global Education: https://www.kent.edu/globaleducation.

Information about Kent State's English as a Second Language can be found here:
http://www.kent.edu/english/esl-center.

# Student Life

## Welcome to Kent

- The Department of Biological Sciences website is: http://www.kent.edu/biology. We are on Facebook, twitter and Instagram (@kentbiology).
- The official Kent State University website is: www.kent.edu
- The City of Kent website can be accessed at: www.kentohio.org

## Student Organizations

- A complete listing of all registered student organizations can be found at the following website: http://www.kent.edu/csi
- Specifically, the Graduate Student Senate may be helpful to graduate students: http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/gss

## Student Services

- Student Legal Services: https://www.kent.edu/sls
- Student Ombuds: https://www.kent.edu/studentaffairs/student-ombuds-2
- Women's Center: https://www.kent.edu/womenscenter
- Title IX Resources: https://www.kent.edu/sss

# Housing

## Off-Campus Housing:

The Commuter and Off-Campus Student Organization and will provide useful information regarding not only off-campus housing, but also information regarding area utilities, banking, shopping, landlord-tenant information and much more: https://www.kent.edu/coso/housing-information.

# BSCI Faculty and Staff Contact Information

| | Phone # | Office# | E-mail |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dr. Laura Leff, Chair | 23614 | 256 | lleff@kent.edu |
| Dr. Sean Veney, Asst. Chair | 23614 | 26 | sveney@kent.edu |
| Dr. Heather Caldwell, Graduate Coord. | 23849 | 114 | hcaldwel@kent.edu |
| Dr. Edgar Kooijman, Undergrad. Coord. | 28568 | WMH312J | ekooijma@kent.edu |
| Dr. Jen Mou, MA Program Coord. | 23625 | ISB251B | xmou@kent.edu |
| Shelley Jurkiewicz, TA Coord. | 23620 | ISB251L | sjurkiew@kent.edu |
| **Animal Facility** | **22575** | | |
| Mark Moser | 23653 | | mmoser2@kent.edu |
| **Academic Advisor** | **22984** | 256 | |
| Joan Iacobacci | | | jiacobac@kent.edu |
| **Academic Lab Manager** | **27828** | ISB251L | |
| Shelley Jurkiewicz | 27828 | | sjurkiew@kent.edu |
| **Graduate Office** | **22819** | 253B | |
| Susan Kieklak | | | skieklak@kent.edu |
| **Graduate Office - BMS** | **22263** | | |
| Dr. John Johnson | | | |
| Donna Warner | 28310 | | djwarner@kent.edu |
| **Grant Coordinator** | **23732** | 226 | |
| Katie Johnson | 23732 | | kjohn179@kent.edu |
| **Greenhouse** | **22469** | | |
| Melissa Davis | 22469 | | mdavis7@kent.edu |
| **Herbarium** | **22453** | 128 | |
| **LAN Administrator** | **21367** | A001-003 | adangona@kent.edu |
| Anthony D'Angona | | | |
| **Main Office Staff** | **23614** | 256 | |
| Alice Kopunovitz | 28308 | | akopunov@kent.edu |
| Stephanie Blair | 28307 | | sblair6@kent.edu |
| FAX 330-672-3713 | | | |
| **Stockroom** | **22574** | 222 | |
| Donna Laverne, Bus. Mgr. | 28306 | | dlaverne@kent.edu |
| Lajuane Mathis | 22754 | | |
| Michelle Kane-Sutton | 23810 | | mkanesut@kent.edu |
| Stockroom e-mail for purchase orders & key requests | | | biostock@kent.edu |

Numbers that begin with a "2" can be dialed direct.  Numbers that begin with "8" are voicemail guest boxes.  You can dial 28888 * and put in the voice mail box number and leave a message.

## Checklists and Policies

The following pages contain the Checklist and Policies, several of which were mentioned throughout this Handbook. Also, feel free to visit the links below for necessary forms.

http://www.kent.edu/biology/graduate-forms

You will find additional forms that you may find useful at the College of Arts & Sciences website: https://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-forms

You will find additional forms that you may find useful at the Graduate Studies website: http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/forms-library

## KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

## POLICY ON ROLE AND STATUS OF GRADUATE STUDENT APPOINTEES

This document is intended for the guidance of graduate appointees and the graduate units in order to provide some uniformity in the role and status of these graduate students.

### I. GRADUATE APPOINTEE INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE

Graduate appointees shall be represented at appropriate levels of university governance in order to ensure a healthy exchange of ideas among students, faculty, and administration, and to utilize the valued counsel of graduate students. The principal guideline should be that graduate appointees participate in policy decisions and be excluded from personnel matters.

A. Departmental Level

Curriculum Committees

Graduate appointees shall be represented on curriculum committees. Those who are responsible for teaching a section of a course shall be represented by member(s) on appropriate course committees. The number of representatives, their qualifications, and their mode of selection shall be determined by the department. The committee chair shall identify those meetings or parts thereof for which attendance by these persons is not expected.

Department Meetings

Graduate appointees shall be invited to and included in general departmental meetings. The department chair shall identify those meetings or parts thereof for which attendance by these persons is not expected.

Graduate Studies Committee

Graduate students shall be represented by voting member(s) on Graduate Studies Committees. The number of such students and their qualifications shall be determined by the graduate faculty of the department. They shall be elected by the graduate students in the department. The committee chair shall identify those meetings or parts thereof for which attendance by these persons is not expected.

All departmental polices affecting graduate appointees (to include grievance procedures, programmatic specifications, and all other policy matters) shall be made available to each graduate appointee at the time of the student's initial enrollment for graduate studies. Graduate appointees shall be notified of modifications in departmental policies which occur during the course of their appointment tenure.

B. Collegial and Independent-School Level

Graduate appointees shall be invited to and included in college faculty and committee meetings which are concerned with graduate matters. The dean of the college shall identify those meetings or parts thereof for which attendance by these persons is not expected.

C. University Level

Faculty Meetings

Graduate appointees shall be invited to and included in university faculty meetings. The President shall identify those meetings or parts thereof for which attendance by these persons is not expected.

## II. CATEGORIES FOR GRADUATE SERVICE APPOINTMENTS

In order to be eligible for a graduate appointment, a student must be enrolled in a specific degree program. A full-time graduate teaching assistant, graduate research assistant, or graduate administrative assistant is expected to devote 49% of the university-defined full-time workload per week (or equivalent assignment) in service and to enroll for a minimum of eight credit hours per semester (See Appendix 1). A half-time graduate teaching assistant, graduate research assistant, or graduate administrative assistant is expected to devote half of the service commitment expected of a full-time appointee per week (or equivalent assignment) in service and to enroll for a minimum of eight credit hours per semester. The tuition remission for a full-time appointee should cover a student's enrollment up to16 hours per semester (prorated for a part-time assistantship). In some programs of study, a lesser tuition remission is acceptable, but the appointee needs to be notified in advance.

An appointee who has tuition remission only does not have a service commitment. Such an appointee is expected to enroll for a minimum of eight credit hours per semester. An appointee who is in the combined baccalaureate and master's program will enroll for both graduate and undergraduate hours as determined by the student's advisor. Note that graduate students nearing completion of their degree who have satisfied all required coursework and that may be registered for only 2 credit hours of Thesis II or 1 credit hour of Dissertation II are considered full-time students.

**EXCEPTIONS TO THE ABOVE PROCEDURES MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH THE COLLEGE'S ENROLLMENT PLAN AND MUST HAVE THE APPROVAL OF THE PROVOST.**

Appointments or reappointments, including tuition remission, are not automatic, but are contingent upon good degree progress and satisfactory performance of duties as determined by the grantor of the stipend.

The graduate appointments outlined below are intended to provide minimal support to enable a student to spend the maximum amount of time in the pursuit of his/her graduate studies with the objective of completing the degree in the shortest amount of time. To this end, it is considered inappropriate for a full-time graduate appointee to be engaged in substantial additional employment other than in an incidental way. Except in unusual

circumstances and with the approval of the academic college Dean and the Dean of Graduate Studies, a graduate appointee may not hold an additional formal appointment through which the total commitment of service at Kent State University thus exceeds 20 hours per week.

A. Research Assistantship (RA)

A student receiving a Research Assistantship is expected to assist a faculty member in his or her research or other scholarly activities. No teaching or service responsibilities are assigned to full time Research Assistants.

B. Teaching Assistantship (TA)

A student receiving a Teaching Assistantship is expected to assist a faculty instructor of record (e.g., recitations, laboratories, grading) or be the instructor of record in their own course.

C. Administrative Assistantship (AA)

A student receiving an Administrative Assistantship is expected to work in service that promotes the mission(s) of the unit or university. These assistantships exclude responsibilities that would typically be assigned to current office staff, personal errands for faculty/staff etc.

## III. STIPEND/TUITION REMISSION DURING SUMMER SESSIONS PRIOR TO OR AFTER A SERVICE APPOINTMENT

A graduate student may receive either a stipend and/or a tuition remission during the summer immediately prior to or after an academic year appointment. This may be done in consultation with the appropriate graduate dean and at the discretion of the department and is dependent upon the availability of funds.

## IV. EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE

Departments shall establish effective means of evaluating and documenting the teaching and other duties performed by each graduate appointee, who has a service commitment, in order to aid the professional growth of the appointee. This evaluation and documentation shall be used for the purpose of counseling the graduate appointee and to assist in making decisions regarding reappointment.

## V. COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS' POLICY

Kent State University affirms its adherence to the following Council of Graduate Schools' policy that is designed for new appointees:

Acceptance of an offer of financial aid (such as graduate scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, or assistantship) for the next academic year by an actual or prospective graduate student completes an agreement, which both student and graduate school expect

to honor. In those instances, in which the student accepts the offer before April 15 and subsequently desires to withdraw, the student may submit in writing a resignation of the appointment at any time through April 15. However, an acceptance given or left in force after April 15 commits the student not to accept another offer without first obtaining a written release from the institution to which a commitment has been made. Similarly, an offer by an institution after April 15 is conditional on presentation by the student of the written release from any previously accepted offer. It is further agreed by the institutions and organizations subscribing to the above Resolution that a copy of this Resolution should accompany every scholarship, fellowship, traineeship, and assistantship offer.

## VI. REAPPOINTMENT, DISMISSAL AND RESIGNATION POLICY

At the time of the initial notification of appointment the department shall clearly communicate its policy on limits on the number of years of support at the master's and doctoral levels. Reappointment is determined by the student's department. Reappointment may be available, contingent upon good progress toward completion of the degree and satisfactory performance of duties. If a service appointee is not to be reappointed, he or she will be given written notice informing the student of the non-reappointment and of the reasons, therefore. Notices of non-reappointment and of reappointment will be given to students no later than the last day of the semester. During the semester in which an appointee receives a master's degree, the student must apply and be accepted into a doctoral or educational specialist program in order to be considered for further appointments. A student may not simultaneously hold a graduate appointment and a full-time fellowship or other appointment from a non-university source.

Dismissal is the termination of the contract for cause. Dismissal may be effected for the violation of the terms of the appointment. The department will give written notice of a recommendation for dismissal to the appointee along with the reasons for the recommendation. This recommendation is forwarded to the appropriate graduate dean for action. If a student is dismissed for academic reasons then the appointment is terminated at that time. Any service appointee who has not been reappointed or has been dismissed may appeal the decision. The appeal must be initiated in writing to the grantor of the appointment within one week of non-reappointment or dismissal.

Notification of resignation by a service appointee is expected to be early enough to obviate serious detriment to the university. An appointee intending to resign should give written notice as early as possible. The appointee may inquire into and consider the acceptance of an appointment elsewhere anytime and without previous consultation. It is agreed, however, that if a definite offer follows, the appointee shall not accept it without giving such notice, in writing, as is indicated in the previous provision (Section V).

## VII. GRADUATE APPOINTMENT SERVICE COMMITMENT

At Kent, a graduate appointment is granted to a graduate student in order to give that student partial financial assistance and support for graduate study and to obtain a service commitment which will be both beneficial to the student's professional needs and goals and to the University's endeavors. The role of a graduate appointee is often that of both student and instructional colleague. The question arises as to whether a graduate appointee has service responsibilities with respect to the academic year or the nine-month contractual time

period agreed to by the faculty. In particular, is a graduate appointee “on duty” during the intersession between fall and spring semesters, during the spring recess, or during the time period following spring commencement and prior to the end of the nine-month calendar commitment of the faculty? This leads to additional confusion with respect to the appointment of graduate students as research assistants in that the time commitment for research assistants must be comparable to the time commitment for graduate assistants and teaching fellows.

A graduate appointee who holds an academic year full time appointment is expected to provide service to the appointing department which approximates 20 hours per week for a total of 300 hours per semester. This may include assignments during the week prior to classes and/or during exam week. The service obligation is prorated for each 5 week summer term.

The service commitment of a graduate appointee who has been appointed by a nonprogrammatic unit will be equivalent to the total time expectations of an appointee who is appointed through a programmatic unit. Due to specific operational requirements of nonprogrammatic units, some of the total time expectation may be satisfied during pre-semester, intersession, or post-semester time periods. If necessary to have the graduate assistant work the week before classes start, the week after classes end, or during breaks, the weekly hours need to be adjusted so no weekly total exceeds 25 hours and the total hours worked does not exceed the required hours of commitment. Such arrangements should be understood by the appointee and the appointing unit at the outset of the appointment period.

In all instances it is expected that the appointee and the appointing unit will strive to ensure that the service commitment is beneficial to the appointee’s professional growth and is commensurate with the mission and goals of the appointing unit and of the University.

## VIII. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A. Purpose

To provide guidelines and methods for resolving complaints by graduate appointees of actions by faculty members or administrators which may be in violation of the “Policy on Role and Status of Graduate Student Appointees.”

B. Resolution

If an issue cannot be resolved through informal conversations between the graduate appointee and other interested parties following reasonable attempts to achieve resolution, the graduate appointee may initiate a formal complaint by notifying, in writing, the Administrator of the graduate unit in which the student holds appointment. The Coordinator of Graduate Studies should be copied directly with such notification.

The Administrator may refer the complaint to the unit’s Graduate Studies Committee for a hearing and a recommendation or may impanel an ad hoc grievance committee for this purpose comprised of graduate faculty members who are able to render a disinterested judgment. Either of these committees will make a recommendation to the Administrator as to the disposition of the complaint.

C. Appeal

If the graduate appointee is dissatisfied with the resolution decided by the Administrator, he or she may appeal the decision, in writing, to the Dean of the College or, in the case of the independent schools, to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Dean may render a final decision based upon the record and information submitted by the complainant and the Administrator of the graduate unit or may appoint an ad hoc grievance committee which will hear the complaint and make recommendation to the Dean for its resolution. In either case the academic college Dean or the Dean of Graduate Studies is the final determinant.

## VIII. RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLIANCE

Graduate Deans will be responsible for assuring compliance with this document within their respective units, with the Dean of Graduate Studies having overall university responsibility.

*Revised 1975*
*Approved by Graduate College Council – 11/05/75*
*Approved by Graduate Student Council – 11/13/75*
*Approved by Graduate School of Business Administration Council – 11/18/75*
*Approved by Graduate Council of the Graduate School of Education – 12/21/75*
*Revised 12/07/83*
*Revised and Approved by Graduate College Council – 10/07/87*
*Approved by Graduate School of Management Council – 4/07/89*
*Approved by Graduate Council of the Graduate School of Education – 4/14/89*
*Revised and Endorsed by University Graduate Faculty Council – 3/9/94*
*Revised 1/20/2000*
*Revised 9/20/2002*
*Revised 4/20/2004*
*Revised 3/20/2006*
*Revised 7/20/2006*
*Revised 9/01/2010*
*Revised 7/07/2011*
*Revised 4/09/2013*

**MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM**/DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES PROGRESS CHECKLIST

Students are expected to complete their program in accordance with this checklist. Support will be based on proof of progress. The most up-to-date versions of all required forms can be found in the graduate forms library on the BSCI website. As of fall 2018 most handwritten forms will no longer be accepted by the Department or the College of Arts and Sciences.

_____1. Formation of faculty guidance committee, which meets before the beginning of the **second semester** for review and approval of student's ***Program of Study*** form..

_____2. Student will submit a research proposal no later than the end of the **second semester** for review by the guidance committee. Student will submit ***Notification of Approved Thesis Topic*** form.

_____3. As part of the required M.S. curriculum, student will complete 6 semester hours of Thesis I credit (BSCI 60199). Credit can be elected in amounts of 2 to 6 hours per semester and should be taken during the **first summer or 3rd semester** of enrollment in the program.

_____4. Following completion of Thesis I (BSCI 60199), students must **continue registration** of Thesis II (BSCI 60299) for 2 credit hours per semester (including in summer) **until they graduate.**

_____5. Schedule Department seminar to present research (if this is what you have decided, otherwise it will be presented as a part of your defense). Should be 30 minutes in length; 20-25 minutes of content with 5-10 minutes of questions.

_____6. Furnish each member of the guidance committee with a copy of the thesis and allow **two weeks prior** to the scheduled final oral defense date (see graduate catalog). At this time notify the BSCI Graduate Office of the scheduled defense date so that the announcement can go out.

_____7. Final oral examination. Student will complete and submit electronically the ***Report of Thesis Final Examination***.

_____8. Thesis certified by student and advisor that it is in final form and meets required guidelines. Student will submit ***Thesis Preparation Approval Form***. Thesis to be approved by Graduate Coordinator and Chair.

_____9. Candidate submits Thesis Preparation Approval Form (above) and two Thesis signature pages to the College of Arts and Sciences and then uploads the Thesis to OhioLINK usually by **end of the thirteenth week of the semester** (check with the graduate office for deadlines). (https://etdadmin.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_olink/r/1500/login)

**DOCTORAL PROGRAM**/DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES/PROGRESS CHECKLIST

Students are expected to complete their program in accordance with this checklist. Support will be based on proof of progress. Ideally, students should complete a doctoral program in five-six years. The most up-to-date versions of all required forms can be found in the graduate forms library on the BSCI website. As of fall 2018 most handwritten forms will no longer be accepted by the Department or the College of Arts and Sciences.

_____1. Formation of faculty guidance committee and approval of ***Program of Study*** form should take place **before the beginning of the second semester.**

_____2. Completion of candidacy exams and admission to doctoral candidacy should take place **after completion of coursework** (generally after 4 semesters of coursework or during the 5th semester of coursework). The student submits **both** the BSCI and university ***Report of Candidacy Exam*** forms. The university form must be completed electronically and submitted to the Graduate Studies office.

_____3. Final designation of all dissertation committee members including outside discipline member must be completed. Afterwards, dissertation prospectus must be presented to the committee. The ***Approval of Dissertation Topic and Prospectus*** form must be filed **no later than the end of the semester after the semester of candidacy**.

_____4. Candidate must complete 30 hours of 80199 Dissertation I (15 hours per semester) to be eligible for graduation. Following completion of 30 hours of 80199 Dissertation I, candidate must continue registration utilizing 80299 Dissertation II (for 1 or 15 hours) until final examination (Doctoral students under a graduate assistantship are required to sign up for 15 hours)

_____5. Candidate applies for graduation by the **end of the first week of the final semester** (check catalog for all deadlines applicable to graduation or contact department graduate office)

_____6. Candidate should schedule department seminar to present their research (if this is how you have decided to present, otherwise it will be a part of your dissertation defense- **you must notify the graduate office of how you will complete this requirement**). Should be 60 minutes in length; 45-50 minutes of content with 10-15 minutes of questions.

____7. Candidate's advisor requests appointment of a Graduate Faculty Representative to final examination committee by completing the ***Graduate Faculty Representative*** form on the College of Arts & Sciences Forms web page (appointment is made by the Associate Dean, Graduate Affairs, College of Arts & Sciences); this request must be **made at least 6 weeks prior to the final examination**. Candidate's advisor selects Moderator for the final defense.

_____8. Circulate dissertation to Dissertation Committee a **minimum of 30 days prior to the defense**.

_____9. Advisor should convene the Dissertation Committee (without candidate) for preliminary evaluation of the dissertation **after the initial 10-day reading period** and communicate suggested revisions to candidate. The outcome of this meeting must be conveyed to the BSCI Graduate Office so they can notify the College of A&S.

_____10. At least **two weeks prior** to the defense notify the BSCI Graduate Office of the scheduled defense date so that the announcement can be generated and distributed. (Your advisor can do this by downloading and completing the ***Pre-Defense Meeting Report***.)

_____11. If changes are required furnish each member of the Examining Committee with a copy of the dissertation **allowing at least 10 days after distribution** before the final oral defense date (check catalog for deadline date for oral exam).

_____12. Final Oral Defense of Dissertation. Candidate will complete and submit electronically the ***Report of Dissertation Final Exam***.

_____13. Dissertation certified by candidate and advisor that it is in final form and meets required guidelines. Candidate will submit ***Dissertation Preparation Approval Form***. Dissertation to be approved by Graduate Coordinator and Chair.

_____14. Candidate submits Dissertation Preparation Approval Form and two Dissertation signature pages to the College of Arts and Sciences and then uploads the Dissertation to OhioLINK usually by **end of the thirteenth week of the semester** (check with the graduate office for deadlines). (https://etdadmin.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_olink/r/1500/login)

# Master's Thesis Defense Guidelines

Candidates for master's degrees at Kent State University may be required or may choose to write and defend a thesis. (Students should consult with their units to determine whether they are required to complete a thesis.)

The word thesis used here refers to a formal research investigation on an approved topic. A thesis requires an oral defense and a written paper evaluated by an academic committee convened for that purpose. Culminating projects that substitute for the thesis (non-thesis options) are not regulated by these policies.

**The Thesis Committee**

When the student has developed a thesis topic acceptable to the advisor, a thesis committee responsible for overseeing the progress of the candidate's thesis is appointed. The Graduate Coordinator in consultation with the student and the student's advisor appoints the members of the committee. This group will consist of at least three members:

1. The advisor, who chairs the committee.

2. At least two additional members from the candidate's department or school.

3. If appropriate, one or more committee members also may be selected from other departments or schools. However, the majority of the committee members must be from the student's home academic unit.

The advisor must be a member of the Graduate Faculty who has been approved to direct theses. The other members of the committee must have at least A-1 Graduate Faculty status. If a co-advisor is used, he or she counts as one of the required members from the student's department or school. (NOTE: only one of the committee members may be A-1 Graduate Faculty Status. All others must have at least A-2 Graduate Faculty Status.)

Special permission must be obtained from the College Dean for anyone on the thesis committee who does not meet the qualifications stated above.

The Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee will, as necessary, review the composition of the proposed committee for appropriate balance, and the topic for strength and suitability.

**Thesis Topic**

All students preparing a thesis are required to file a **Notification of Approved Thesis Topic** form. When the topic has been approved by the advisor and the committee has been formed, the advisor and all members of the committee, the Graduate Coordinator, and Department Chair or School Director sign the form and forward it to the College Graduate Affairs Office for approval

by the Dean. The College office returns a copy of the completed form to the Department or School.

Although a detailed thesis prospectus is not required, a paragraph should be attached to the **Notification of Approved Thesis Topic** form that includes a clear statement of the problem to be undertaken and the procedure or methodology to be used in the research.

**The Final Examination (Oral Defense)**

When the advisor believes the thesis is ready for preliminary approval, the student will distribute it to the committee. The advisor will designate the time and place of the oral defense and notify all members of the thesis committee. The oral defense should be scheduled to allow a minimum of ten days for all members of the thesis committee to review the thesis.

In the absence of the advisor, the Graduate Coordinator will postpone the oral defense. In the case of long-term absence or enduring illness of the advisor, the Department Chair or School Director, in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee and the original advisor, should make arrangements for a substitute.

The final oral defense will be open to the university community. The advisor should notify of the time and place of the oral defense to the Departmental or School Office so that it may be announced in a suitable way. The student should provide copies of the abstract of the thesis to the Departmental or School Office so that it will be available to interested individuals prior to the oral defense to familiarize members of the Graduate Faculty with the methodology and findings.

**The thesis advisor will act as the moderator** at the oral defense. His or her duties are to preside and see to it that all participants act in a civilized, polite, and proper manner. He or she should be familiar with the procedures of the oral defense and has the authority to suspend proceedings should a situation arise that would not be conducive to a fair examination.

The student will open the oral defense with a brief presentation of his or her findings, after which the members of the thesis committee will question the candidate in an order determined by the advisor. Questions dealing with the substance, meaning and usefulness of the research in the thesis are of greatest priority. Inquiries or comments dealing with punctuation, grammatical minutiae, spelling, etc., are out of order. Such comments should be written out and privately submitted to the student and the advisor.

When, in the judgment of the advisor, members of the thesis committee have had an adequate opportunity to question the student, the advisor may open the examination to non-committee members of the graduate faculty, then, as the advisor deems appropriate, to others present.

If, in the opinion of the advisor or upon a motion duly passed by a majority of the committee, it is deemed desirable to discontinue the oral defense, the advisor may recess the oral defense until a time mutually agreeable to the advisor, the student, and the thesis committee.

When the questioning has run its course, the advisor will excuse everyone except members of the thesis committee and, if in attendance, the Graduate Coordinator and School Director. Parliamentary procedure will be followed to determine the success or failure of the student, with the advisor serving as chair.

The student should be evaluated upon both:

(a) the overall quality and significance of his or her thesis, and

(b) the oral defense of his or her findings.

A student passes the oral defense and becomes a "candidate" for the degree if he or she passes with no more than one dissenting vote.

The advisor and members of the thesis committee will sign the **Report of Thesis Final Examination form**, and each registers his or her vote of "pass" or "fail." Thesis committee members may not abstain in this vote. The Graduate Coordinator and Department Chair or School Director also signs the report and the document is forwarded to the College Graduate Affairs Office for the signature of the Dean. The College office returns a copy of the completed form to the Department or School.

Following any revisions required by the committee, the advisor and the Department Chair or School Director must approve the final version of the thesis document by signing the signature page of the Thesis and the Thesis Preparation Approval Form when the student submits the thesis.

* * *

*Approved by Graduate Studies Administrative Advisory Committee*

*Feb. 05*

*KENT STATE UNIVERSITY*

## DISSERTATION FINAL EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

The supervision of the final stages of the dissertation and approvals thereof are the responsibility of the student's academic unit. This unit may be a department, a school, or a designated graduate program within a college, department, or school. For purposes of the policy that follows, the term "program" or "program faculty" will be used to designate the academic unit that grants approval of the dissertation and the final examination.

### THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

This committee is comprised of graduate faculty members and is appointed by the candidate's program when the candidate has developed an appropriate dissertation topic and has an approved Advisor. Normally, this committee will consist of a minimum of the Advisor (who will act as chair of the committee), two additional members from the candidate's program, and one faculty member from a discipline outside the program. (NOTE: only one of the four members may be A-3 or F-3 Graduate Faculty Status. All others must have F-4 Graduate Faculty Status.)

The Advisor and at least two of the remaining three must be members of the Graduate Faculty who have been approved to direct dissertations. If a Co-Advisor is desired, s(he) should be included in the above members. If, for warranted reasons, it is desirous to have a person on the committee who does not meet the above qualifications, special permission must be obtained from the Dean of the appropriate college or designee.

When the Advisor believes the dissertation is ready for preliminary approval, the Dean must be notified to request the appointment of the Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) to serve on the Examining Committee. Once the GFR is appointed, the dissertation will be circulated in easily legible form among the members of the committee. The Advisor will allow a minimum of a ten-day period for reading of the dissertation and will then convene the dissertation committee including the GFR (without the candidate) for the purpose of evaluating it. Recommended revisions will be noted by the Advisor and communicated to the candidate, and when in the opinion of the Advisor and the candidate, the appropriate revisions have been made, the Advisor will inform the Graduate Coordinator, the Chairperson/Director, and the Dean.

### COMPOSITION OF THE EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

1. **The Examining Committee** will consist of the Dissertation Committee (a minimum of the Advisor, two additional members from the candidate's program, and one faculty member from a discipline outside the program), plus a representative from the Graduate Faculty who may act as moderator.

2. If a separate moderator is desired, s(he) will be selected by the Dissertation Committee from the members of the Graduate Faculty who have been approved to direct dissertations. S(he) will not be a faculty member in the candidate's major program. The principal duties of the moderator are to preside and to moderate. S(he) should see to it that all participants act in a civilized, polite, and proper manner. S(he) should be familiar with the procedures of the oral defense, and has the authority to suspend the examination should a situation arise that would not be conducive to a fair examination.

3. **The Graduate Faculty Representative** will be appointed by the Dean, or his/her designate after consultation, when appropriate, with the Advisor or Program Chairperson. To qualify, s(he) must have directed a dissertation to completion a member of the D-list. The Graduate Faculty Representative should be familiar with the general content area of the dissertation. The Graduate Faculty Representative most often comes from outside the student's department but may be a member of the candidate's program faculty but outside the candidate's area of concentration. The graduate faculty representative may also come from outside the university but must have directed a dissertation to completion. The Graduate Faculty Representative represents the Graduate Faculty by noting whether or not the nature of the questioning and the responses meet highly respectable scholarly standards. If s(he) has some reservation in regard to this, the reservations should be presented immediately to the Dean or his/her designate. The Graduate Faculty Representative is expected to question the candidate and to vote on the passing of the final examination.

**THE FINAL ORAL DEFENSE:**

1. When the Dissertation Committee has met and has agreed to proceed to the final examination, the Advisor will designate the time and place of the final oral defense and notify all members of the examining committee. The oral defense is open to any member of the University wishing to attend and, therefore, a facility adequate to meet this requirement should be provided. The defense should be scheduled to allow a minimum of ten days for all of the examination committee to look over the dissertation; this is in addition to the ten-day period preceding the Dissertation Committee meeting. In the absence of the Dissertation Advisor, the oral defense may not be held. If it is a matter of long term absence or enduring illness of the Advisor, the Chairperson/Director of the department/school, in consultation with the appropriate Dean, should make appropriate arrangements for a substitute.

2. The dissertation must be in final form (not merely a late draft but also not necessarily the final typed copy) prior to the final oral defense. It is permissible to number pages in pencil, however, so as to reduce the cost of final changes that may grow out of the oral defense. If, in the opinion of more than one member of the examining committee, the dissertation is not in acceptable final form the oral defense will not be held. This is to be determined by vote prior to the final oral examination and without the candidate or others being present. If a negative vote occurs, the candidate may be called in to provide clarification. Acceptable form refers to the substance and usefulness of the dissertation as well as the quality of the writing. A rescheduling of the oral defense, if necessary, will occur when, in the opinion of the Advisor and the student, the dissertation has been modified to incorporate the suggested changes. The dissertation must be acceptable, with no more than one dissenting vote, before the rescheduled final oral can be held. If the dissertation is not in suitable form at this second scheduled oral, the Dean will be so notified. Further action is then the responsibility of the Dean.

3. The final oral defense will be open to the University community. Notification of the time and place of the defense should be provided to the college or independent school so that it may be announced in a suitable publication. Copies of the abstract of the dissertation should be available in the candidate's department/school and the college or independent school prior to the defense and at the defense itself, to familiarize other members of the Graduate Faculty with the methodology and findings.

4. The candidate will open the defense with a brief presentation of his/her findings, after which the members of the examining committee will question the candidate in order to be determined by the Moderator. When, in the opinion of the Moderator, members of the examining committee have had an adequate opportunity to question the candidate, the Moderator may open the examination to appropriate questions from others present.

5. Questions dealing with the substance, meaning, and usefulness of the research in the dissertation are of greatest propriety. Questions or comments dealing with punctuational or grammatical minutiae, spelling, etc., are out of order; such comments should be written out and privately submitted to the advisor.

6. If, in the opinion of the Moderator or upon motion duly passed by a majority of the committee, it should be deemed necessary to discontinue the defense, the Moderator may recess the defense until a time mutually agreeable to the Moderator, the Advisor, the Candidate, and the Dean.

7. When the questioning has run its course, the Moderator will adjourn the defense and the room will be cleared of everyone except the members of the examining committee. Parliamentary procedure will be observed to determine the success or failure of the candidate, with the Moderator acting as Chair without a vote.

8. The candidate should be evaluated both (a) upon the overall quality and significance of his/her dissertation, and (b) upon the oral defense of his/her findings. A candidate passes the final oral defense if s(he) passes with no more than one dissenting vote.

9. All members of the examining committee will sign the Report of Final Examination form, recording their votes; committee members may vote "Yes" or "No" but they may not abstain. The Moderator and

Department Chairperson or School/Program Director must then sign the Reports of Final Examination, which is forwarded to the college or independent school.

10. Only members of the examining committee that voted "YES" are required to sign the dissertation signature page.

* * *

*Approved by Graduate Studies Administrative Advisory Committee: 12-19-02*
*04-08-04*

# Forms

The most up-to-date versions of all required forms can be found in the graduate forms library on the BSCI website. As of fall 2018 most handwritten forms will no longer be accepted by the Department or the College of Arts and Sciences.

You will find additional forms that you may find useful at the College of Arts & Sciences website: https://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-forms

You will find additional forms that you may find useful at the Graduate Studies website: http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/forms-library